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Contents

The Week.....	159
Leading Editorials	
No Shirking of Responsibilities.....	161
Our Duty to Armenia.....	163
The Market for Votes.....	165
Ratification as a Panacea.....	166
General Articles	
Militarism in China..... John Dewey	167
Okura Sees Newport..... Francis Hackett	169
The Coal Question in Great Britain..... G. D. H. Cole	171
Renoir..... Clive Bell	173
To Bring Down Prices..... L. K. Frank	175
Extra (Verse)..... H. Campbell	176
Correspondence.....	177
Reviews of Books	
Mary Olivier..... F. H.	180
Mathematical Philosophy Made Fool Proof. R. F. A. H.	181
Chinese Poems..... Stark Young	182

The Week

IN his Labor Day message the President again holds out the promise of a readjustment in the relations of capital and labor. There is to be an industrial conference—to discuss “fundamental means . . . of putting the whole wage question upon another footing.” The country is certain to give a respectful hearing to any proposals the President may have. But it cannot be forgotten that more than three months ago Mr. Wilson declared “The object of all reform in this essential matter must be the genuine democratization of industry.” There has never been so great an opportunity for courageous action as events of the last three months have offered. But that phrase, “democratization of industry,” still remains wrapped in mystery. It is hard to have faith to believe that we shall ever learn now what the President means by “putting the whole wage question on another footing.”

MANY people are guessing that Mr. Gompers intends to come out against the Plumb Plan. That is the interpretation they put upon the postponement of a decision by the Executive Council of the A. F. of L.—and they may be right. But it is also possible that so shrewd a leader as Mr. Gompers simply wants more time to gauge the strength of

the support behind the Brotherhood leaders before he makes up his own mind. It is not worth while speculating which explanation is the right one. What is more important is that Mr. Gompers and the group around him are approaching a new decision. For two years they have been able to stand both as leaders of American Labor and barkers for the Democratic Party. It is likely that the roads will soon divide.

MR. GOMPERS is reported by some of the newspapers to have “won over” the leaders of the railway shopmen to the idea that a strike of their crafts at this moment would be bad policy. We doubt whether the leaders had to be persuaded to that point of view. The strike in California was not authorized, and the union leaders worked diligently to call it off. They have two good reasons for not wanting their strike now. The shopmen constitute less than a fourth of the railway employees represented by the Federated Trades—and the other three-quarters of the workers are still undetermined what their course will be. In the second place, the leaders of the shopmen’s unions do not want to be charged with obstructing the President’s efforts to reduce the cost of living. They have nothing to lose by waiting. But they can wait? What is really being put to a test is the authority of the leaders over the restless rank and file.

IN the case of the threatened steel strike it is again the rank and file that is most impatient with delay. The Steel Workers’ Committee has had to send out telegrams to its locals warning them against taking things into their own hands and urging that they wait until “all amicable means of settlement” have been exhausted. A settlement without a strike would save a vast amount of suffering; but the recent exchange of letters between unions and employers shows viewpoints widely different. Mr. Gary insists upon the open shop as better for the employee no less than the employer; declares that the Steel Corporation takes great interest in the living conditions of its workers; and asserts that it does not combat labor unions “as such.” The open shop is of course a matter of opinion. Mr. Gary’s other two points are questions of fact. And anyone who has studied conditions in the great steel plants and the dingy hovels of the Pittsburg steel district will find it hard to take his words at their face value.

IN the Senate a sub-committee of the Committee on the Judiciary has found that there are no constitutional obstacles that prevent ratification of the proposed Anglo-Franco-American alliance. It reports that fact; and—by the simple argument "Germany is a menace, France must recuperate"—recommends to the Senate that the alliance be accepted. The sub-committee does not attempt to reconcile the idea of a separate alliance with the principles of a general League. It does not seem even to wonder why it is necessary to guarantee the protection of France and not to guarantee much weaker Belgium, Italy, China or Serbia. With a few happy phrases it recommends that we pledge ourselves to a binding contract that forfeits a large measure of our own control over our policy in Europe and places it securely in the hands of the French Foreign office.

AUSTRIA lost the right to self-determination when the Peace Conference specifically denied her the privilege of uniting with Germany, no matter how overwhelmingly her people might vote for such a union. But even with so specific a provision the French Foreign Office seems dissatisfied. Not only do the French diplomats want to see Austria denied self-determination; they want her denied the right even to agitate for it. A Paris cable reports that they are now demanding a clause in the Austrian treaty forbidding any propaganda in favor of annexation to Germany. Particularly when coupled with a dispatch from Coblenz, arriving almost simultaneously, this proposal for restricting propaganda in Austria throws an interesting light on the politics of the French Foreign Office.

FOR the dispatch from Coblenz reports fresh activity on the part of the French propagandists who are trying to split the Rhine country away from Germany. The celebrated Dr. Dorten, drawing renewed inspiration from Paris, is again touring the Rhineland with promises of lighter indemnities and a friendly hand if only the people will see that it is to their advantage to break away from Germany. To the credit of our military command be it said that Dr. Dorten is barred from Coblenz and from the small territory held by American troops around that city. But in the much larger section held by their own army the French are scattering literature and commanding that the French language be taught in the elementary schools. Propaganda is a skillful weapon, and nowhere are its possibilities better realized than by the sophisticated statesmen who rule the Foreign Office on the Quai d'Orsay.

IF Hungary is rid of a Hapsburg monarch it seems still to be the Hapsburg influence that rules in Budapest. The new cabinet has been chosen by Stephen Friedrich, and Friedrich was himself Premier in the cabinet of the Archduke Joseph. Four other friends of Joseph's appear in important posts in the new government—and Friedrich speaks with regret of having "sacrificed the symbol of Christian Hungary in the person of the Archduke Joseph" and of a determination "to yield no further." If Friedrich intends to fight for reaction and even for the restoration of a monarchy everything is on his side. The Rumanians still occupy Budapest, pillaging despite all warnings of the Peace Conference; their troops are available for the snuffing out

of any popular movement. So long as this foreign army is camped in Hungary the democratic protestations of the diplomats in Paris will have a mocking echo.

AMBASSADOR MORRIS is reported now to be urging recognition for the government of Admiral Kolchak at Omsk. But if Associated Press reports are correct the distinction of being first to recognize Kolchak has fallen to a fellow officer—General von der Goltz, rebel leader of the Germans in East Prussia who have been holding out for a return of the Kaiser. With forty thousand German troops von der Goltz is to march into Russia to relieve the pressure on Kolchak. Whether he proposes to call a Constituent Assembly we do not know. But doubtless he could make use of American munitions.

IT is interesting, in view of the reported recommendations of Ambassador Morris, to note that the tide of American opinion has begun to turn against Kolchak. During the week both the New York Globe and the World printed editorials on the question of recognition. The Globe said of Kolchak: "He failed to make the Russian people believe in him. He failed even to win the confidence of the Siberians at his rear. His failure is written large in his retreat, and is the cause, not the result, of the refusal of the Allies to send him help." And on Sunday the World declared: "The real weakness of Kolchak has come from the lack of support in Siberia and Russia. If he had succeeded in winning recognition among the people with whom he is in actual contact, it would have made little difference what attitude foreign governments assumed while waiting for further proof of his ability to establish a government. . . . It is recognition by Russia that Kolchak needs."

EVENTS in Bessarabia show how "the suppression of Bolshevism" can work out when it is managed by a foreign Power with an army. Bessarabia, a Russian province since 1812, adjoins Rumania on the northeast. After the Soviets came into power in Russia, Rumanian troops marched into this southern province with the declared purpose of preventing the westward spread of Bolshevism. Both General Presan, chief of the general staff headquarters of the Rumanian army, and General Bopesco, commander-in-chief, issued proclamations in January and February of 1918 declaring that troops would be used only to suppress Bolshevism and would be withdrawn from Bessarabia as soon as law and order had been reestablished in the province.

THESE promises of withdrawal have never materialized. On the contrary, after a long period of occupation, Rumania proclaimed the annexation of Bessarabia—a province never before under Rumanian rule. Recently the Bessarabians sent delegates to the Peace Conference, in protest against this action, and from Paris we are now receiving reports of the rule to which their country has been subjected. The Rumanian command, say these delegates, has abolished the Russian Zemstvos and municipalities. It has ordered all inhabitants to declare their allegiance to Rumania, under penalty of confiscation of property. And it has executed a number of the members of the popular assembly—and reduced the size of that body from 162

members to 46, so as to limit it principally to delegates disposed to be obedient to Rumanian orders. All of this is supposed to be part of the necessary task of suppressing Bolshevism.

WHAT do the statesmen in Paris think of it? Bessarabia is a small land, whose claims it is hard to establish. No Allied statesman has publicly protested against the policy Rumania has adopted. But by a correspondent of the New York Times we are assured that the statesmen do not approve. "The representatives of the principal Allied Powers at Paris are said to have been very much disappointed, not to say displeased."

ON the military situation in South Russia—where both General Denikin and the Soviet commanders have claimed successes during the week—Major General Sir Frederick Maurice makes this statement: "Denikin's capture of Kamashin on the Volga was proclaimed as having brought him into communication with Kolchak's extreme left, and as having established a united anti-Bolshevik front on the east. Even if Denikin had been able to hold Kamashin, this united front was little more than a line on a map, as, owing to the absence of lateral communications, it had little military value. Now the Bolsheviks appear to have reinforced their troops on the Volga by detachments from their army which has defeated Kolchak, and even the line on the map has been broken. There now does not seem to be any prospect of Denikin and Kolchak being able to combine before the beginning of next summer." If before we lift the blockade we must await the results of a campaign that is not to be begun until the summer of 1920, how many more women and children will have been starved—partisans of neither Denikin nor Lenin?

ONE opportunity which Viscount Grey will find to clear away a cause of friction between Britain and America is presented in the case of those Hindu prisoners who are now facing deportation from this country. Against the tireless activity of British agents working for extradition the American Federation of Labor, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and other trade union bodies have protested. Asylum for political offenders has been part of the American tradition since the days the first colonists fled England to settle along the Coast. Viscount Grey is a man who may be expected to see that British funds and British agents working to subvert this principle will only imperil the friendship of our two countries.

THE negroes killed by mobs in Knoxville, Tenn., and Caldwell, Ga., had committed none of those crimes which ordinarily sentence a black man to mob justice. In Knoxville the mob was not even able to find its victim. So, after looting the sheriff's home, it went to other parts of the negro quarter and killed two men suspected of nothing. In Caldwell it was not a crime that led to the lynching. Simply for something he had said Eli Cooper was taken from his home and shot. The mob threw his body into a church and burned the building. Against this anarchy and terrorism it seems almost useless to plead. While conditions grow steadily worse a timid Congress refuses to take

action. Perhaps there is not much it can do. But at least it could make lynching a federal crime—to be prosecuted by outside authorities and not by sympathizers and friends of the terrorists.

WITH the agreement of the Hippodrome management to grant the right of collective bargaining the striking actors in New York have won their first victory. It is uncertain whether the other managers will follow the lead of the Hippodrome or whether they will try to go ahead with non-union casts and stagehands. In either case we hope that the actors will not forget the start that they have made as their own producers. At the present time the Equity Association controls three theatres, and a Broadway production of "The School for Scandal" has been announced. If the managers agree to recognize the Equity Association the actors will have won their own victory. But not until the theatre is made more of a cooperative venture, rid of the censorship of the shrewd promoter, will the actors have won a real victory for the public.

MORE promising of relief from high prices than any of Mr. Palmer's plans for running down the occasional profiteer is the announcement that distributive centers for food and clothing are to be opened in thirty-six eastern cities by the National Cooperative Association. It will take a long time to build a national system of cooperatives, but with its principle of distribution on a cost basis the Association is proceeding toward inevitable success. A third of the people of England now buy food and clothing through cooperative organizations. No partnership would have a better chance of reducing prices than a new aggressive alliance between the National Cooperative Association and the forces of organized labor.

No Shirking of Responsibilities

IT is impossible that any living man who is capable of looking ahead in international affairs should regard the work of the peace makers at Paris as anything but a badly botched job. Whether by defect of intelligence or of will, they knocked together a peace which will have to be shored up indefinitely with the props of superior military force. But let us not forget that America shares the responsibility for the kind of peace that she is now asked to underwrite. It was very largely the uncertain attitude of the American people that encouraged the European diplomats to overreach themselves in the pursuit of nationalistic advantage. Plainly, therefore, America can not with a clear conscience follow the advice of Senator Knox and withdraw from the responsibility of signing the general treaty. That is a counsel of despair. It will be a grave misfortune if America is forced to accept the peace settlement without reservation or amendment. We see no reason why America must accept such a settlement. We are not a con-

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